



Welcome to Today's Webinar!

Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and its Measurement

This event will start at 11:00 a.m. E.T.

Welcome to Today's Webinar



Audio Information

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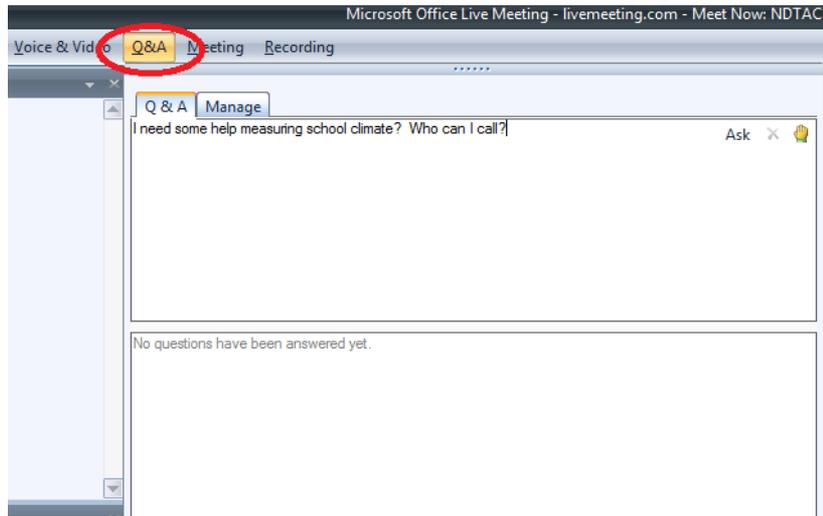
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Q&A



If you have a question for the presenters, please type it in the Q & A Pane or email sssta@air.org during the Webinar.

Evaluation



Safe and Supportive Schools
Engagement | Safety | Environment

Participant Feedback

Establishing Supportive Relationships between Teachers, Staff, Students and Families
Wednesday, February 17, 2011

Please provide us with your feedback on today's Webinar by answering the questions below. The form should only take a few minutes to complete and all responses will be completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary.

*1. My role can best be described as (please check as many as apply):

- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Member | <input type="checkbox"/> School/District Administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member | <input type="checkbox"/> State Administrator | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Support Staff Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | |

An event evaluation will appear as the last slide in the presentation. Please input your answers *directly* into the slide. All answers are *completely anonymous* and are not visible to other participants.

For assistance during the Webinar, please contact the Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center at sssta@air.org.



The Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center



- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students.
- Provides training and support to states, including 11 grantees funded under the Safe and Supportive Schools Program and other state administrators; administrators of districts and schools; teachers; support staff at schools; communities and families; and students.
- Goal is to improve schools' conditions for learning through measurement and program implementation, so that all students have the opportunity to realize academic success in safe and supportive environments.

*The content of this presentation was prepared under a contract from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students to the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This presentation does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education, nor do they imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.



<http://safesupportiveschools.ed.gov>



Springboard

Roles

- School/District Administrators
- Teachers
- School Support Staff
- State Administrators
- Community & Family

Topics

- Engagement
- Environment
- Safety
- School Climate Measurement



Safe Routes to School

State in Focus

Louisiana

In October 2011, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) posted 2010-2011 School Climate Report Cards for the eight districts currently participating in the Safe and Supportive Schools initiative. These report cards can be viewed on the [LDOE website](#).



[View Louisiana Profile](#)

Partner Highlights

New Search Tool Helps Users Find Federal Grants to Fund Youth Programs October 25, 2011

The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (FindYouthInfo.gov) has created an online Web tool that allows users to search for federal grant opportunities by youth topic or federal agency on Grants.gov. Grants.gov provides information...

[Full post](#) | [All posts](#)

Technical Assistance

Need help improving the conditions for learning in your school, district, or state? [Get Help](#)

Upcoming Events

Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement

Nov 30 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm ET
Dec 1 11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET

[Learn More](#)



[View Events](#)

Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions

Dec 14 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm ET
Dec 15 11:00 am - 12:30 pm ET

[Learn More](#)

Research

A National Institute of Justice (NIJ) study has found that school-level interventions reduced dating violence as much as 50 percent in 30 New York City public schools. [Full report](#)

NCES releases report on student victimization in U.S. schools, including fear and avoidance behaviors of crime victims and nonvictims at school. [Full report](#)

News Clips

November 28, 2011

Study Links Academic Setbacks to Middle School Transition

While much research points to 9th grade as a problem transition year for students, a new study suggests the move from elementary to middle school may be more of a worry.

[Full story](#)



Which of the following best describes your current role?

- State Education Personnel
- District or School Administrator
- Teacher or School Support Staff
- Community or Family Representative
- Student
- Researcher
- Other



Which of the following reflects your most pressing issue?

- Selecting a school climate model
- Understanding the impact of good school climate on academic achievement
- Identifying/developing a strong school climate survey
- Communicating the importance of school climate and its impact on academic achievement



Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and its Measurement

David Osher, Ph.D., American Institutes for Research



Safe and Supportive Schools
Engagement | Safety | Environment



1

School climate frameworks, including the Safe and Supportive Schools Model

2

Ways in which school climate impacts the academic and developmental outcomes of students

3

Characteristics of good school climate surveys

4

Strategies for communicating the importance of school climate

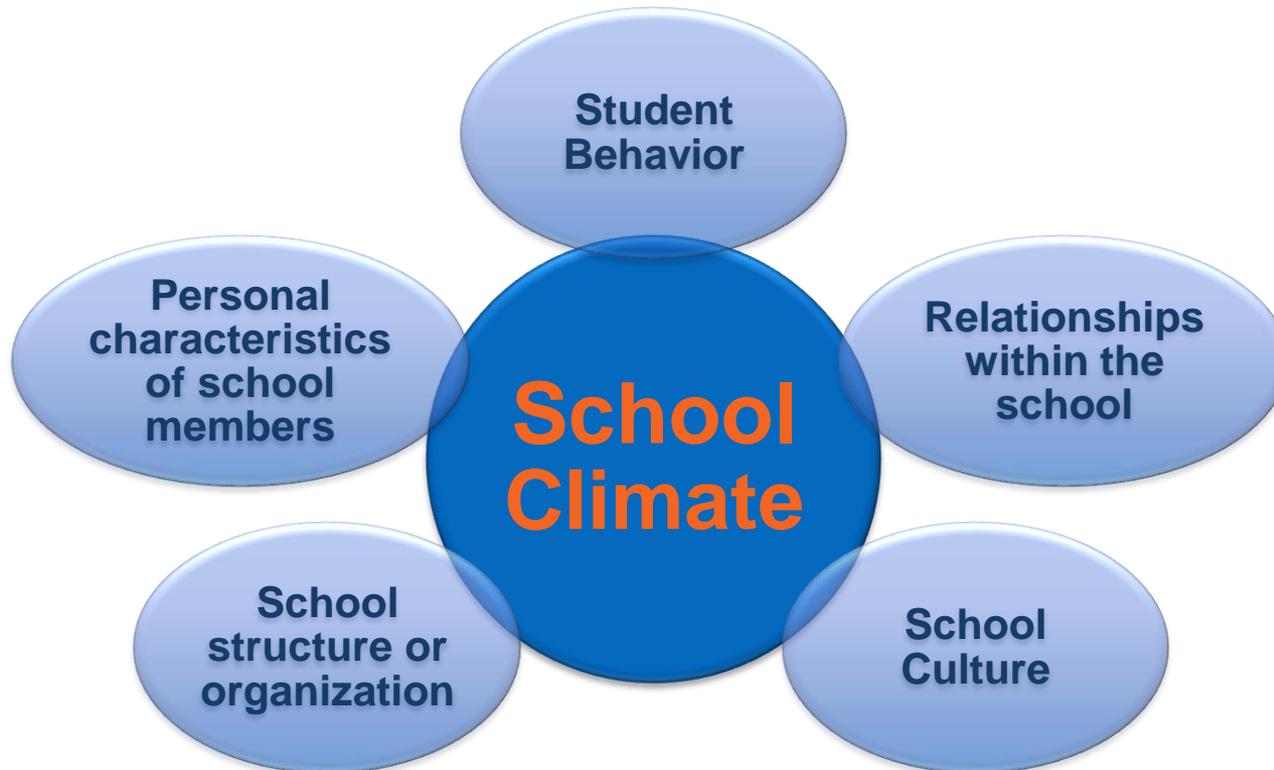
School Climate Frameworks



Safe and Supportive Schools
Engagement | Safety | Environment



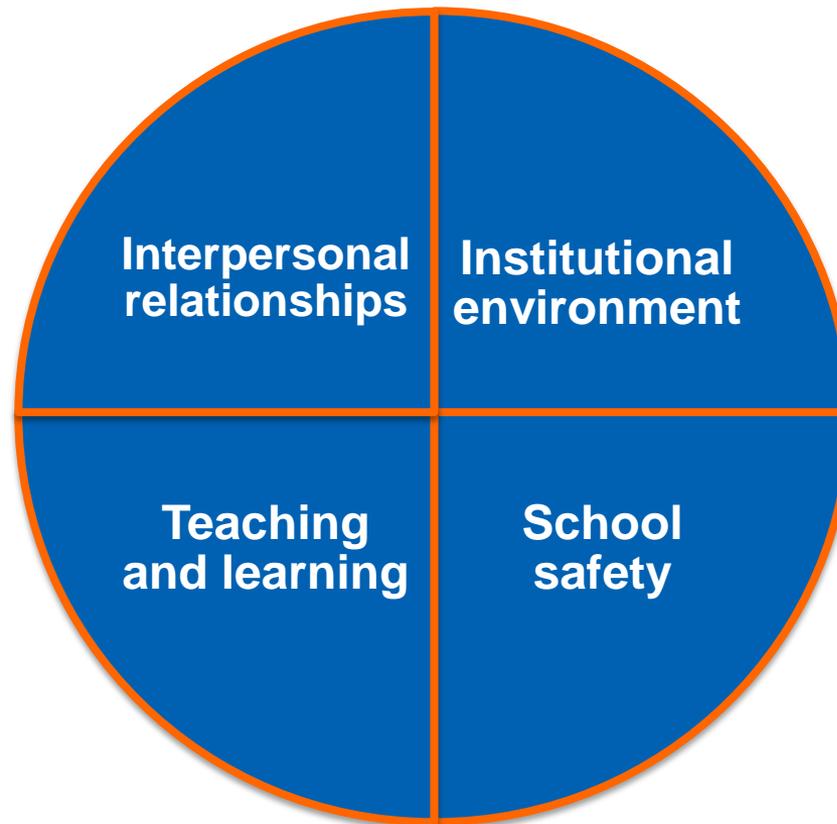
- Historically, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers have framed and measured many aspects of school climate **separately**, only capturing parts of school climate.



School Climate Frameworks



- Practitioners and researchers agree that school climate is a broad concept and should at least include several aspects:

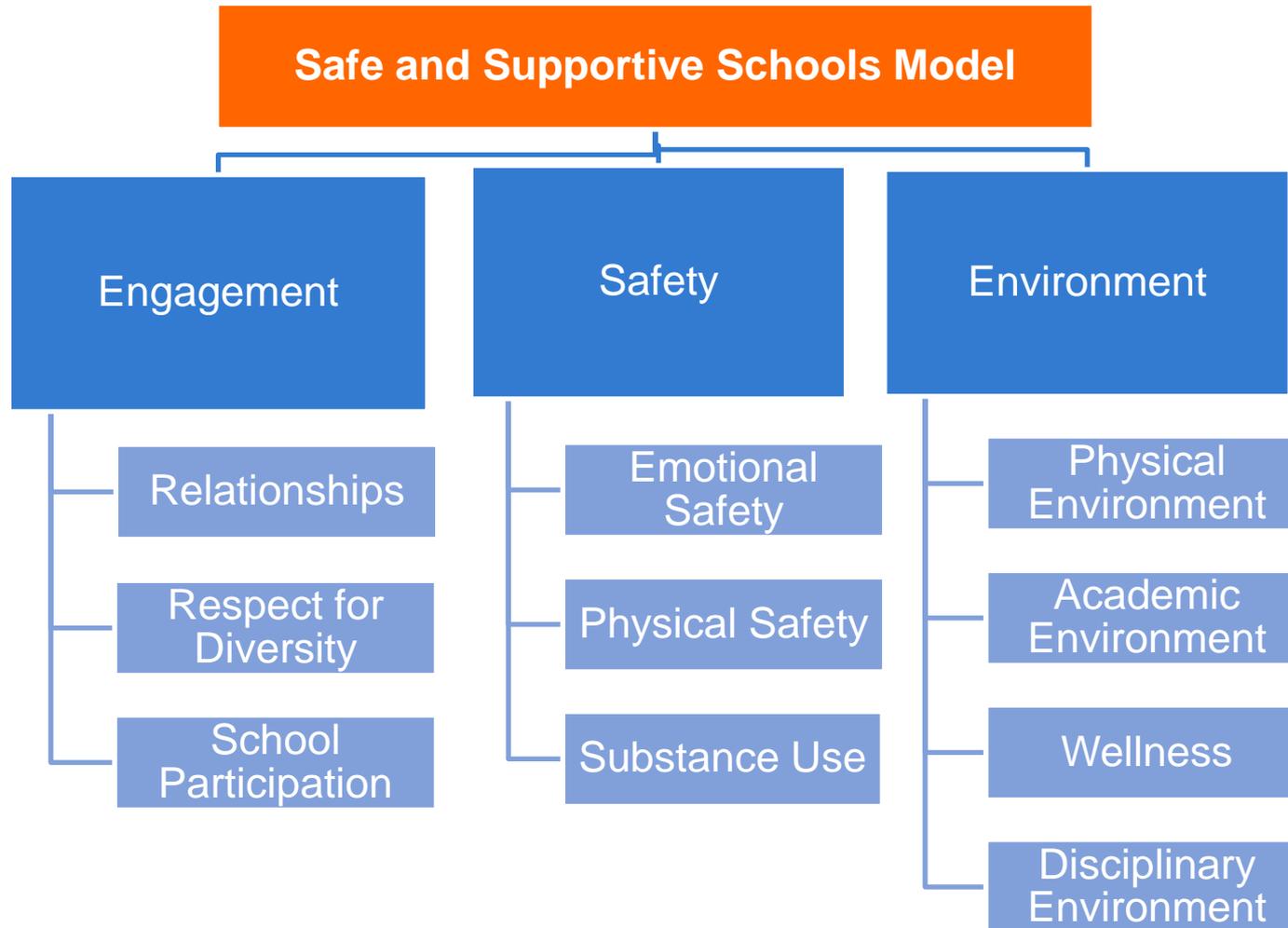




- Research and Practice-Based Frameworks
 - The National School Climate Council
Definition of Climate
 - The Conditions for Learning Model
4 Dimensions of the Conditions for Learning
 - University of Chicago Consortium for School Research
5 Essentials
- Policy Framework
 - **Safe and Supportive Schools Model of School Climate**



Safe and Supportive Schools Model of School Climate





- Safe and Supportive Schools Model of school climate was developed to encourage comprehensive approaches to measuring and improving climate.
- However, practice and research-based frameworks may also inform strategies to improving climate.



Example of an Actionable School Climate Framework



■ Engagement

- Relationships:

- **How Measured:** Ask students and teachers about whether or not their relationships with students and teachers are caring.
- **How one intervenes:** Ensure teachers know students' names and interests and that each student is connected with and supported by a caring adult.

- Respect for Diversity:

- **How Measured:** Ask parents whether or not they feel the school welcomes families that are similar to them; ask students whether they have experienced disrespect from adults due to their race, ethnicity, or culture.
- **How one intervenes:** Promulgate cultural competence standards; employ social emotional learning curricula that focuses on community building addresses the importance of valuing and addressing diversity.

- School Participation:

- **How Measured:** Ask students whether they participate in extracurricular activities.
- **How one intervenes:** Ensure all students are invited and can participate in extracurricular activities.



Example of an Actionable School Climate Framework (continued)



■ Safety

- Social and Emotional Safety:

- **How Measured:** Ask students how often they were made fun of, called names, or insulted at school.
- **How one intervenes:** Employ Social and Emotional Learning Curricula that includes a focus on community building and empathy.

- Physical Safety:

- **How Measured:** Ask students how safe they feel traveling between home and school.
- **How one intervenes:** Work with community groups and public agencies to create safe pathways to school.

- Substance Use:

- **How Measured:** Ask students whether they have used a variety of substances.
- **How one intervenes:** Employ evidenced based substance abuse prevention curricula.



Example of an Actionable School Climate Framework (continued)



■ Environment

- Physical Environment:

- **How Measured:** Ask students and staff whether the lavatories are safe and clean.
- **How one intervenes:** Identify why they are not clean, and work with facilities to create a clean environment.

- Academic Environment:

- **How Measured:** Ask students whether teachers provide feedback on their assignments that helps them improve their work and whether teachers think all students can do challenging work.
- **How one intervenes:** Provide Professional Development to teachers.

- Wellness:

- **How Measured:** Ask students if they eat salty snack food at school.
- **How one intervenes:** Work with students and the appropriate administrators to find and make available attractive and healthy snack food.

- Disciplinary Environment:

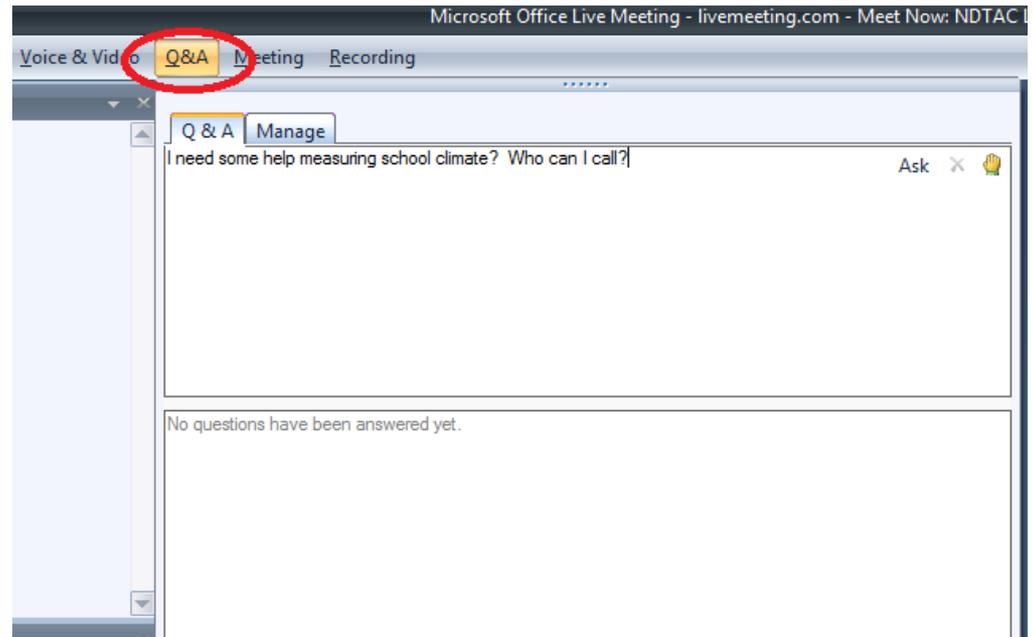
- **How Measured:** Ask students if students at the school are comfortable sharing ideas about rules and policies.
- **How one intervenes:** Develop opportunities for student voice in the development of class norms.



Questions?



If you have a question for the presenter, please type it in the Q & A Pane or email sssta@air.org.



Ways in Which School Climate Impacts the Academic and Developmental Outcomes of Students



School Experiences Which Contribute to a Healthy School Climate and Academic Achievement



Protection

- Connection
- Safety
- Positive Relationships With Adults And Peers
- Caring Interactions
- Academic Challenges
- Academic Support
- Academic Engagement
- Positive Role Modeling
- Social Emotional Learning
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Access to Needed Services And Supports

Citations ■ 1,2,4,9,15,18,20,25,28,30,31,36,37,38,40



School Experiences Which Contribute to Poor School Climate and Low Academic Achievement



Risk

- Lack of connection
- Lack of safety
- Teasing, bullying, gangs
- Negative relationships with adults and peers
- Uncaring interactions
- Low expectations
- Academic disengagement
- Academic frustration
- Poor role models
- School-driven Mobility
- Reactive punitive approaches to discipline

Citations ▪ 1,2,4,9,15,18,20,25,28,30,31,36,37,38,40





Does your school/district exhibit...

- Many protective factors, few risk factors
- Some protective factors, some risk factors
- Many risk factors, few protective factors



Benefits of Improved School Climate

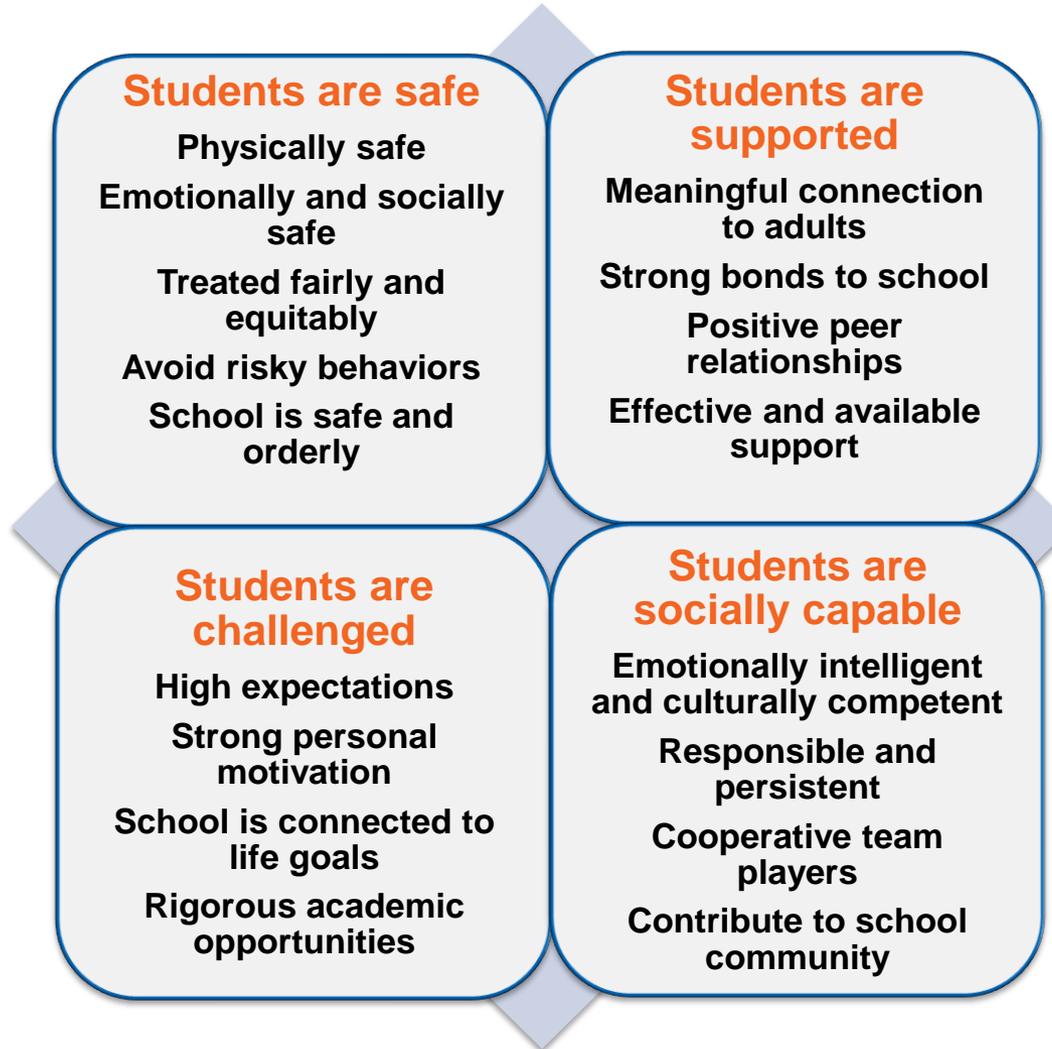


- Improved:
 - test scores
 - graduation rates
 - school safety
 - student attendance
 - working environment (student-teacher and peer relationships)
- Reduced drop-out rate
- Higher rates of teacher satisfaction

Citations ■ 2,3,7,8,16,22,23,24,26,27,28,32,36,38,40,41,44



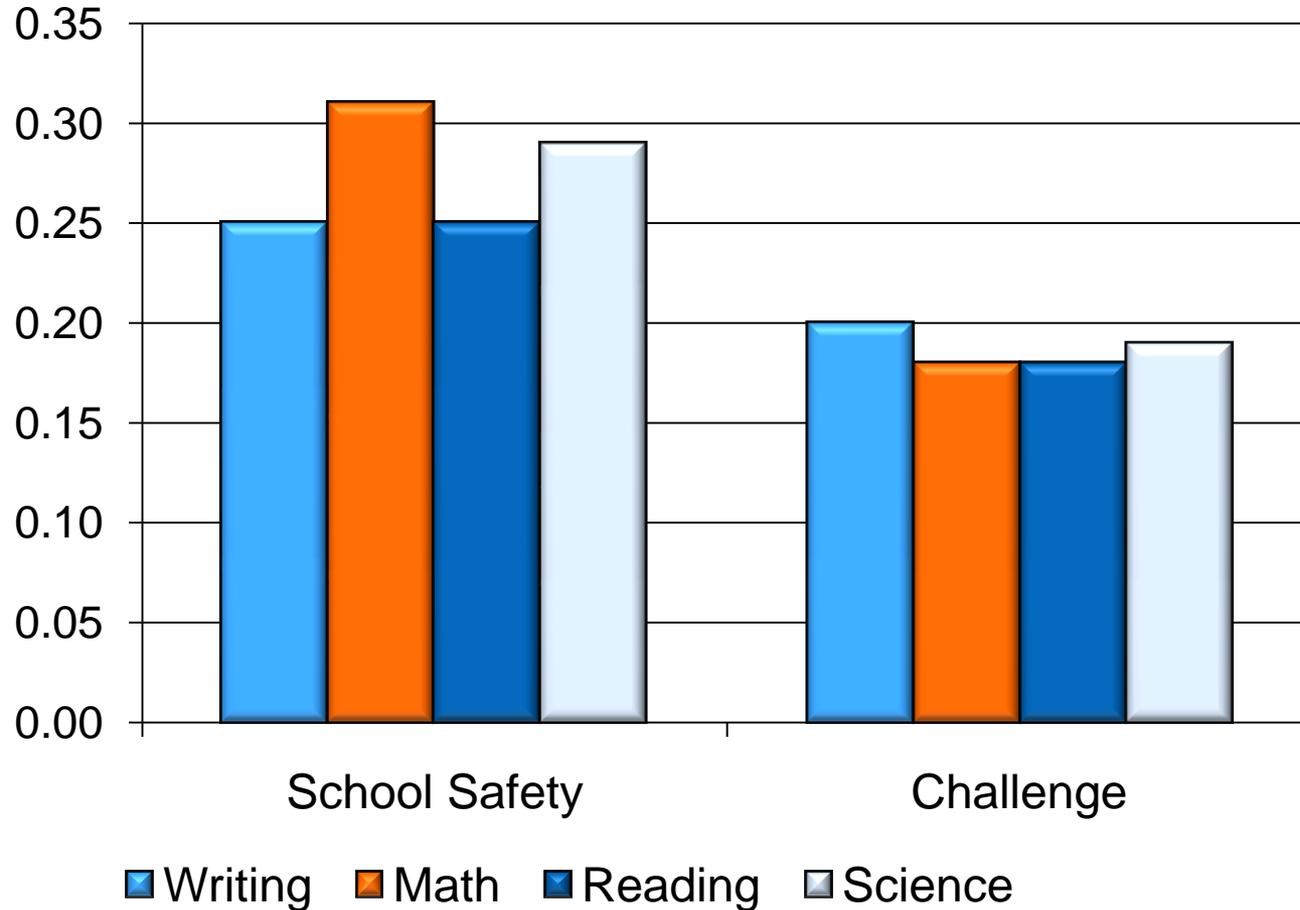
Conditions for Learning: Key Aspects of School Climate Which Support Enhanced School Academic Outcomes



Safety, Academic Challenge, and Statewide Test Performance in Chicago



Correlation Between PSAE Tests and Conditions for Learning Chicago



Polling Question #4



Which of the four areas of Conditions for Learning do you believe needs the greatest improvement to meet your students needs?

- Students are safe.
- Students are challenged.
- Students are supported.
- Students are socially capable.



Illustrative Standard of Excellence for a Safe and Respectful School



- Students feel physically safe in their classes, in the hallways and bathrooms, and outside around the school.
- They feel emotionally safe because students treat each other with respect, get along well together, and look out for each other.



What Aspects of School Climate Predict Healthy Development?



- Physical and emotional safety
- Opportunities for social and emotional learning
- Caring teacher-student relationships
- Participation in school
 - Attendance
 - Participation in class
 - Participating in extra-curricular activities
- Consistent, restorative discipline

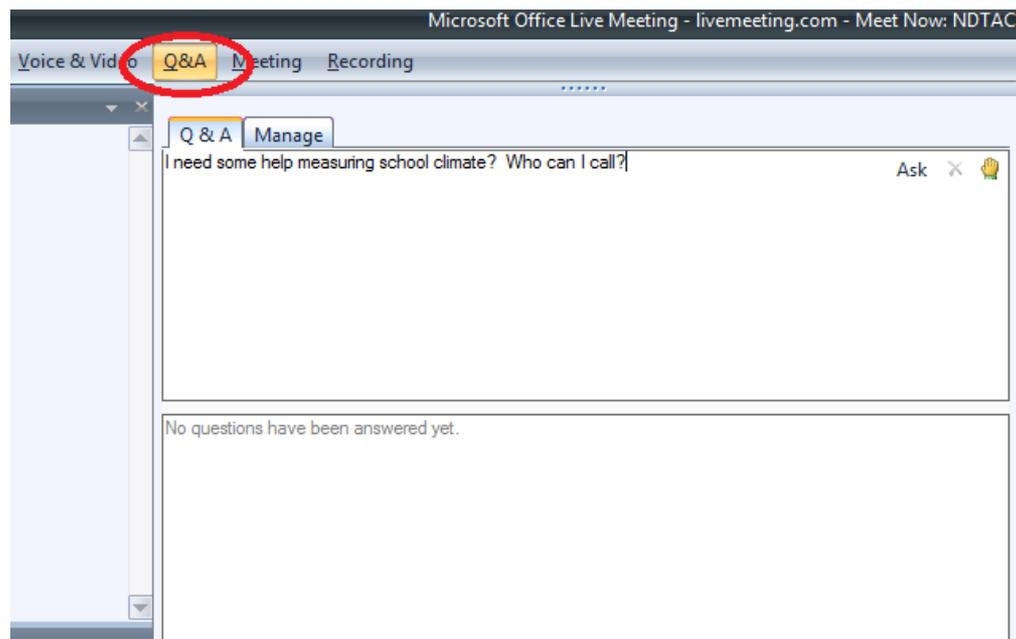
Citations ■ 12,29,34,38,43,45



Questions?



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Characteristics of Good School Climate Surveys



Measuring School Climate



- In order to improve school climate, we must first be able to measure school climate!
- School climate is multi-faceted – incident counts, suspension counts, attendance rates and statewide Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results do not tell the whole story.
- Many existing state-level surveys only measure some facets of climate.
- If existing measures of climate do not meet the following goals, it may be in need of additional investment and improvement.





- Measures of school climate should:
 - Encompass multiple aspects of school climate
 - Be able to be processed quickly enough to share before the end of the school year
 - Be collected through valid and reliable instruments with good psychometrics
 - Be collected from multiple respondents
 - Be collected so that subgroups can be examined
 - Be collected using multiple instruments, such as
 - Incident data
 - Attendance data
 - YRBS
 - School climate surveys
 - Be actionable and practical to administer
 - Include measures that are understood to have a direct impact on academics



Climate Measurement Instruments Should be Able to Facilitate:



Monitoring

Evaluation

*Planning and
Resource
Allocation*

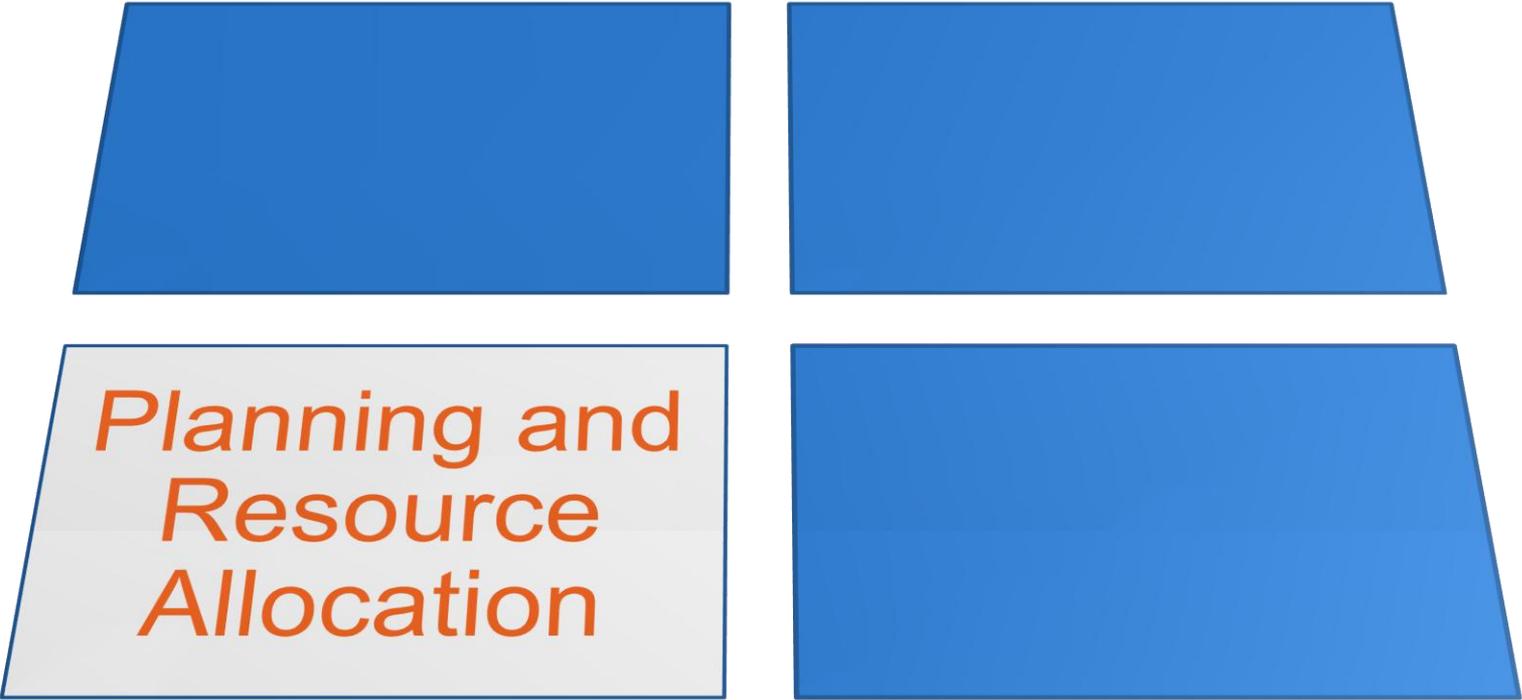
*Transparency
and
Accountability*



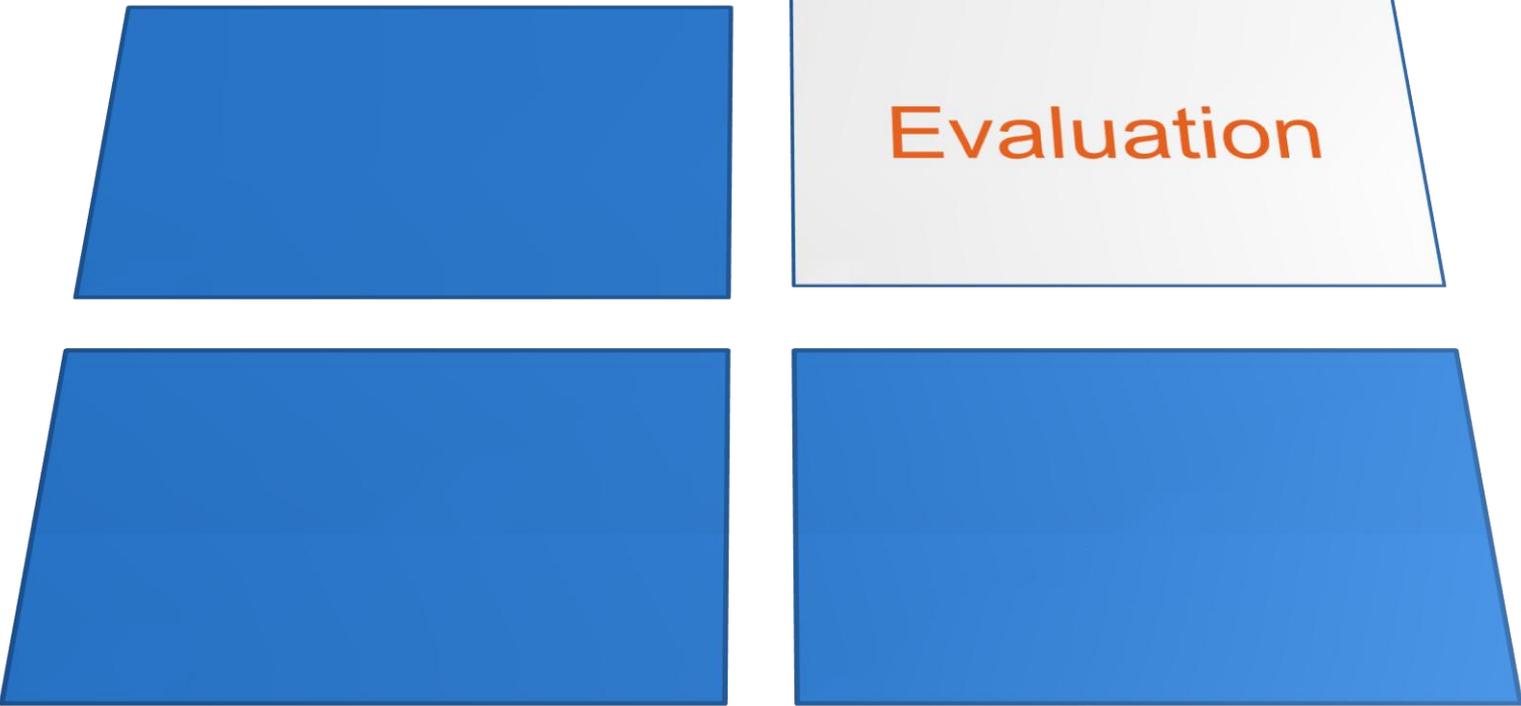
Measurement Goals



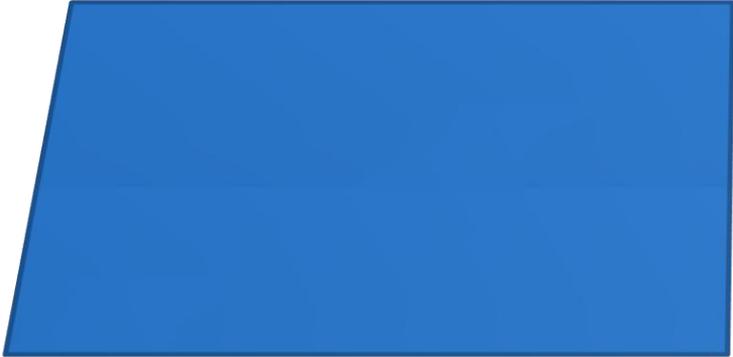
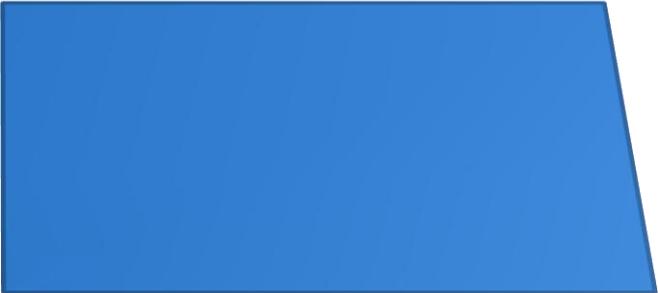
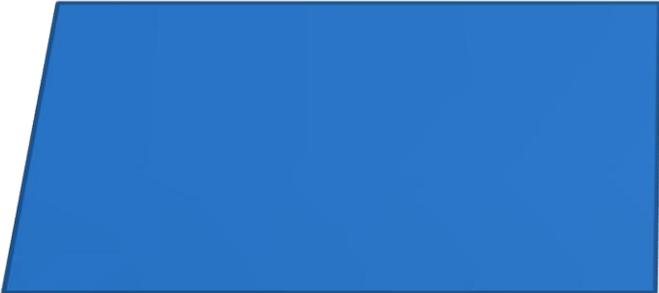
Measurement Goals



Measurement Goals



Measurement Goals



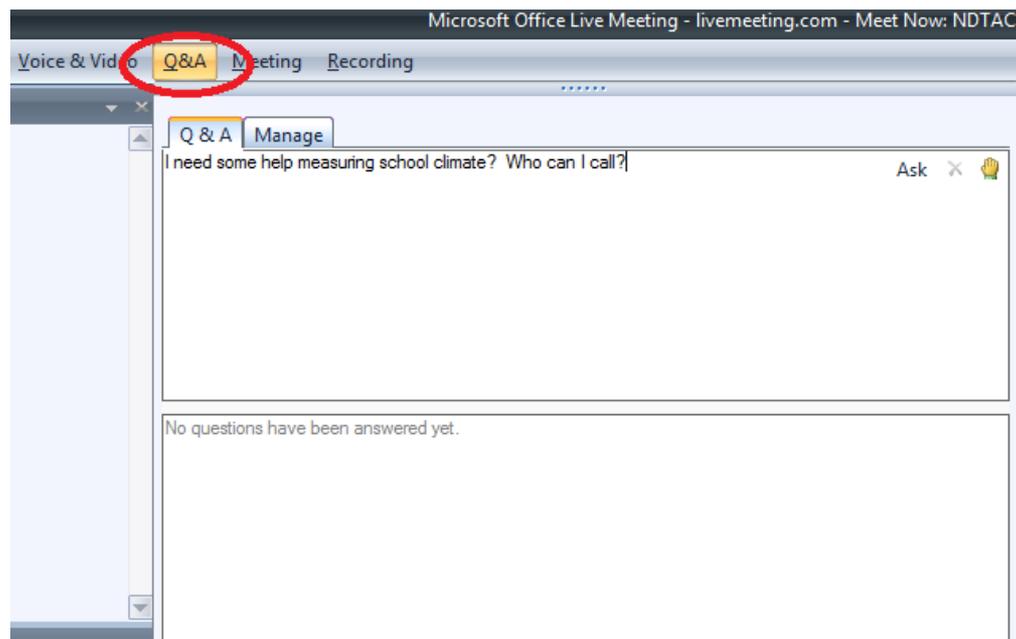
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Strategies for Communicating the Importance of School Climate





- Focus on problem solving, not on blaming.
- In order to create sustainable changes in school climate, you must get buy-in from various stakeholder groups. How do you convince groups to buy in?
 - Provide stakeholders with the message of why school climate is so vital to student outcomes.
 - Provide stakeholders with a framework for collaboration in which there is 1) a clear plan of action to improve climate, and 2) their voices will be heard during the planning and implementation processes.



Strategies for Communicating the Importance of School Climate



- Allow input from the intended audience on the best mode of communication.
- Use non-technical language whenever possible.
- Provide concise, accurate information – brief word documents or power points.
- Refer to the forthcoming Lessons Learned Brief that will be released by SSSTA.





- Better climate →
 - improved learning and higher test scores!
 - higher graduation rates, more satisfied teachers, less drop outs, lower turnover rates, and improved school safety
- Better climate is cost-effective as well as cost beneficial.
- Why is measuring climate necessary?
 - Data can identify needs and inform future interventions.
 - Data can document improvements and successes.
 - Data can identify subgroups who experience school climate as poor.
 - Data can identify areas where students, staff, and parents view climate differently.



Messages to LEAs and School Boards



- Beginning the discussion with this group – modes of communication
 - Face to face meetings are best – presentation at conferences, board meetings or one on one meetings.
 - Providing opportunities to discuss results with this group is important.
 - E-mails or phone calls are much less effective.



Messages to School Administrators and Teachers



- Administrators and teachers can play an active role in improving school climate.
- Better climate → improved discipline and learning, reduced stress, better test scores.
- Why is measuring climate necessary?
 - What gets measured gets done! Measuring climate is necessary to identify issues and improve school climate.
 - Measuring climate to identify issues that can help improve conditions for learning and teaching
 - Existing measures are incomplete
 - Creates opportunities to discuss climate issues



Messages to School Administrators and Teachers



■ Modes of Communication

- Buy-in from administrators is key for buy-in at school level. Administrators can then champion this effort to teachers in many ways.
- Face to face meetings whenever possible – staff meetings or one on one meetings with principals or other administration.
- E-mails or school message boards can get out message on the importance of climate.
- Professional development on improving climate is critical.
- Provide support to school planning meetings (e.g., AYP meetings).



Messages to Families



- Better climate → safer school, improved learning, improved health, less risky behavior, better social-emotional skills – in other words, a better, safer school and a better, happier, safer child.
- Families can play an active role in improving climate – school climate is linked to home environment and families can advocate for improved school climate.
- Family surveys provide a way for parents to give feedback on school climate and areas needing improvement.





■ Modes of Communication

- School website
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Back to school night
- School newsletters
- PTA/PTO meetings
- Community-based presentations
- Social (online) media – Facebook, Twitter, Wikis, YouTube Channel, Podcasts, etc.



Polling Question #5



If you anticipate pushback, from whom do you expect the most?

- LEAs and school boards
- School administrators
- Teachers
- Parents
- More than one of the above



- Potential areas of pushback for measuring climate/climate surveys
 - Cost
 - Privacy concerns
 - Impact on classroom time
 - Measures of school climate and safety already exist
 - Seems like one more test and one more type of accountability





■ Cost concerns

- The results of the survey will help determine the most efficient ways to allocate future resources and determine which programs are working, or are needed, so it saves \$\$ in the long run.
- There are several surveys available on the Safe and Supportive Schools Grantee website that are publically available or available through the survey developer – some of which are free, many others of which are affordable.
- Many scoring options as well to maximize affordability.





■ Privacy concerns

- Data that are collected will be secure and students will not be asked for information that could allow them to be identified.
- Completed paper surveys will be collected in classrooms by students or a single person at school responsible for distributing and processing surveys – teachers and school administrators won't see completed surveys.
- Online surveys can ensure similar security.
- Hard copies of the surveys will be destroyed after processing.
- Data will be reported at the school level, not at the individual level.
- School-level data will not be reported for subgroups with X or fewer students.





- **Impact on classroom time**
 - Surveys should not take more than a single class period or single faculty meeting to complete.
 - Some take less than 20 minutes to complete.
- **Measures of school climate already exist**
 - As we've seen, existing measures of school climate may be inadequate for several reasons – validity, coverage of climate, etc.
- **Seems like one more test**
 - It is not a test. It is an opportunity to hear student, teacher, and family voices.
 - This is where it is important to stress the link between climate and outcomes.
 - Provides **context** for school academic performance and demonstrates focus points where schools can improve performance through improving climate.



First Steps of Collaboration



- Once momentum to collaborate with stakeholders is established, how do you start creating an improvement plan?
 - Create climate improvement team led by an administrator, including teachers, social workers/psychologists, district staff, family leaders and community partners/ providers.
 - Assign a school climate coach.
 - Adopt a comprehensive vision for the collaborative.
 - Write a “brief” to clarify the vision.
 - Start a process for translating the vision into policy.
 - Develop a 5 year strategic plan.
 - Move the strategic plan to implementation.



Take Aways



■ For all:

- Research demonstrates a strong link between school climate and both academic and developmental student outcomes.
- It is important that we have strong measures of climate both to identify needs and sustain support.
- Systematically measure school climate via valid and reliable surveys.
- Review existing resources (don't reinvent the wheel).
- Use survey data for planning, monitoring, and outcome evaluation.
- Communicate the importance of school climate and its measurement in a manner that addresses stakeholder levels of awareness.

■ For States:

- Support policies and procedures that encourage the appropriate use and selection of school climate surveys.
- Include school climate in school and district "report cards."

■ For districts:

- Communicate importance of school climate to board and staff.
- Implement efforts to protect groups at risk of victimization.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary teaming among teachers.
- Ensure climate measures include academic challenge and engagement.
- Support the inclusion of disaggregated school data in school improvement planning.



Take Aways (continued)



■ For schools:

- Prevent physical violence, bullying, and emotional abuse through universal preventative approaches.
- Enhance relationships between staff and students.
- Employ positive approaches to discipline.
- Encourage family engagement.

■ For families:

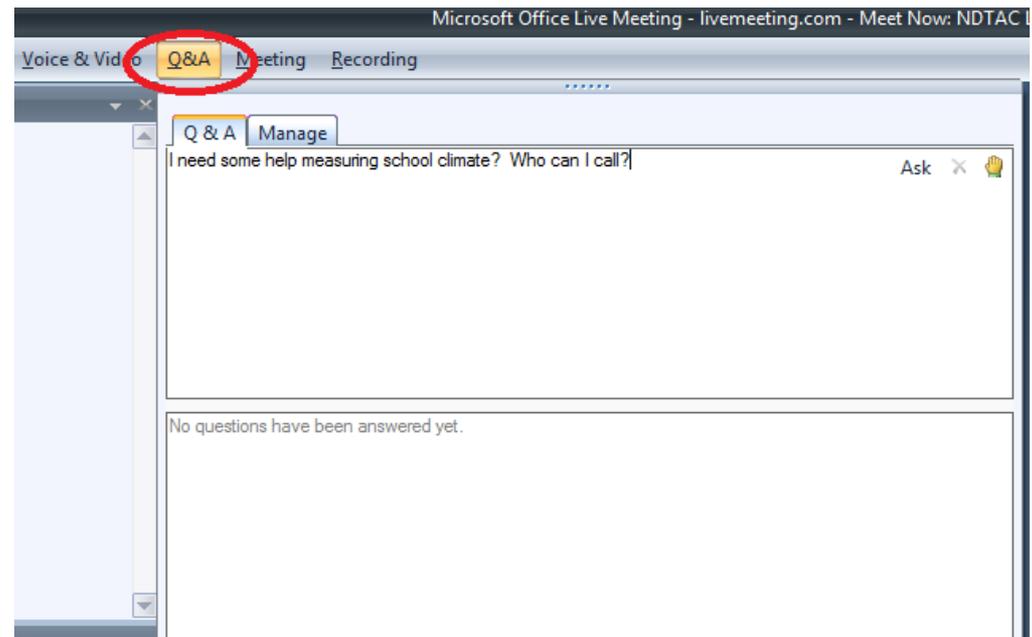
- Get updates on what is happening at school and in your child's classroom.
- Maintain consistent contact with your child's teachers.
- Hold school accountable for supporting a positive school climate.
- Reinforce academic, social, and emotional lessons at home.



Questions?



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School Climate Citations



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- **Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions**

December 14, 2011 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm ET

December 15, 2011 11:00 am – 12:30 pm ET

- The FY11 schedule of Safe and Supportive Schools TA Center Webinars will be posted as soon as it is available.